

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please AMEND claims 48, as follows. For the Examiner's convenience, all claims currently pending in this application have been reproduced below:

1-47. (Cancelled)

48. (Currently Amended) An exposure apparatus for exposing a wafer to an exposure light via a pattern of a reticle, said apparatus comprising:

a chamber in which the exposure light passes;

a conditioner configured to ~~circulate a~~ flow an inert gas through said chamber and to purge an atmosphere in said chamber with ~~an~~ the inert gas; and

a port through which the wafer is transferred between said chamber and another apparatus outside of said exposure apparatus, said port having a load-lock mechanism including a pump configured to create a vacuum below atmospheric pressure in said port and a supply mechanism configured to supply the inert gas into said port after the vacuum is created, so that an atmosphere in said port is substantially the same as an atmosphere in said chamber.

49. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 48, wherein said exposure apparatus comprises a plurality of said ports.

50. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 49, wherein said plurality of ports comprise a first port configured to load the wafer and a second port configured to unload the wafer.

51. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 48, further comprising an interface section for stocking a wafer between said port and the other apparatus.

52. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 51, wherein said interface section comprises a load-lock mechanism.

53. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 51, wherein said interface section is shared by a plurality of said ports.

54. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 48, wherein the other apparatus includes a coating/developing system.

55. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 48, wherein said port comprises a temperature control mechanism for controlling a temperature of the wafer.

56. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 55, wherein said temperature control mechanism comprises at least one of a heater and a cooler.

57. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 55, wherein said load-lock mechanism and said temperature control mechanism are configured to operate in parallel with each other.

58. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 48, wherein said chamber comprises a temperature control mechanism for controlling a temperature of the wafer.

59. (Cancelled)

60. (Previously Presented) A system for manufacturing a device, said system comprising:
an exposure apparatus as defined in claim 48, for exposing a wafer, in which the device is to be manufactured, to an exposure light via a pattern of a reticle; and
another apparatus configured to perform for the wafer, at least one of a pre-process and a post-process with respect to an exposure process performed by said exposure apparatus.

61. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing a device, said method comprising steps of:

exposing a wafer to an exposure light via a pattern of a reticle using an exposure apparatus as defined in claim 48;

developing the exposed wafer; and

processing the developed wafer to manufacture the device.

62. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing a device, said method comprising:

a first process step of processing a wafer using a system as defined in claim 60;

and

a second process step of processing the wafer which has been processed in said first process step to manufacturing the device.